

Route 66 Update

Winter 2025



CABQ's Route 66 Centennial Celebration is now in the **implementation** phase, as CABQ departments and partners launch promotions and public-facing projects in 2025. Partnerships and a "One Albuquerque" effort built the necessary momentum for Centennial projects, building on extensive planning, strategizing, and coordination by multiple city departments and community partners. CABQ's Centennial efforts have been recognized by state and national partners and grantors for our innovative and directed approach to celebration, collaboration, and inclusion, and some projects will become national models for future historic preservation and public art efforts.

Arts & Culture (DAC) is CABQ's coordination lead for CABQ Route 66 Centennial, supporting cohesion among communications, promotions, public relations, special projects, community events, updates and more. CABQ's multi-faceted effort has great momentum as a result of community engagement and investment alongside cross-departmental efforts. Beyond event planning, public art, branding, and a dynamic website, Mayor Keller's administration has focused extensive municipal efforts on housing, transit, and public safety along the Central Ave corridor. This document includes general updates on Route 66 and project tracking from **Arts & Culture, Metro Redevelopment Agency, Parks & Recreation, Planning, AFR, APD, Albuquerque Community Safety Department, Transit, Municipal Development, and the Department of Health, Housing, and Homelessness.**

Route 66 Visitor Center – An Essential Centennial Venue

The Route 66 Visitor Center on West Central at Nine-Mile Hill will be an essential stop for visitors and locals as the city commemorates the first 100 years of the Route & celebrates the start of the next 100!

Centennial programming at the Visitor Center will launch in June 2025 featuring signature events, live music, new exhibits, and a growing, landscaped Sign Park where visitors will walk among new and historic signs, including the Mountain View Lodge sign, Revivir aka El Serape, and more.

Currently, DAC continues to upgrade infrastructure to ensure the building is safe and fun for visitors to enjoy events, exhibits, and stunning views.



Photo by Julian Dossett, New Mexico Tourism Department

Route 66 External Funding

To date, DAC secured \$565,000 in **grant funding** for public art experiences and activations on Route 66 in 2025 and 2026. This external funding includes \$788,800 from the State of New Mexico Tourism Department and is a major source of funding for Route 66 art projects; \$30,000 award for Albuquerque Neon from the National Park Service; and \$75,000 from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to support a new public art project in the International District. In addition, City Council received \$328,800 Destination Forward Grant from the NM Tourism Department to support the design, fabrication, and installation of a neon East Gateway sign.

DAC will continue to apply for external funding throughout 2025. The next aligned opportunity is the [Bloomberg Asphalt Art Initiative](#) for \$100,000 for asphalt art to be painted directly on Route 66.



Visit Albuquerque Partnership

Visit Albuquerque is using its international tourism trade connections to market Route 66 in Albuquerque. Along with other Destination Marketing Organizations on the route, Visit ABQ's outreach to international visitors is vital to heritage tourism during the Centennial years.

Visit Albuquerque also will launch a marketing campaign in mid-2025 to promote the Centennial and encourage visitation. The marketing campaign will include paid advertising. In addition, Visit Albuquerque developed our **comprehensive ABQ Route 66 website** (see p. 3) which includes trip-planning tools, neighborhood information, historical information, sliders of "then and now" photos, crowd-sourced photos with geo-tracking on Route 66, listings for accommodations and events, and animated graphics with our shared CABQ Route 66 branding. A timeline of historic events and itineraries for loving Route 66 in Albuquerque will ensure the site has a long life beyond the Centennial.





VISIT ALBUQUERQUE

85°

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plan my trip

CRUISING TO THE FUTURE IN ABQ

Celebrate 100 years of Route 66

LEARN MORE

ALBUQUERQUE'S ROUTE 66

100 Years, Countless Stories

Albuquerque has had quite a few memorable moments on Route 66 over the last 100 years, shaping its identity as a major stop along the historic highway. From its heyday in the 1930s and 1940s as a bustling route for cross-country travelers to its revival as a symbol of American nostalgia, Route 66 continues to leave its mark on the city. Learn more about the history of the Mother Road, from its beginnings in 1926 to its modern-day cultural significance and how Albuquerque has evolved alongside it.

1926



HEADLINE TO GO HERE ONCE

WRITTEN

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GET YOUR KICKS ON 66
& STAY IN THE LOOP

Sign up for ABQ's
e-newsletter

FIND HIDDEN GEMS ON
THE MOTHER ROAD

Order a 2024 Visitor's Guide

000
Days

000
Hours

000
Minutes

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Seconds

*Until the Centennial Celebration



This page features website designs for CABQ's Route 66 website developed and hosted by Visit Albuquerque: (top) landing page with navigation; (middle left) historic timeline; (middle right) countdown graphics; (bottom left) crowd-sourced imagery and geo-tracking widget.

Department of Arts & Culture

Arts & Culture divisions and venues planning Route 66 activations include Public Art, Community Events, Albuquerque Museum, the KiMo Theater, and the Route 66 Visitor Center. The Department is expanding existing partnerships, informing the public, and tracking all CABQ departments' Route 66 projects. Major projects include interactive art stops that incorporate storytelling murals and augmented reality, new public art, a video series, and many special events that will support and highlight Albuquerque's rich art scene, local cultures, historic sign inventory, and Route 66 history.

Augmented Reality & Interactive Art Stops



[Ojos Diferentes](#), Refract AR Santa Fe experience (above);

With a team of contracted creative companies and at least 15 local artists, DAC is developing a series of art stops along the length of Central Avenue inviting residents and visitors to explore Albuquerque's stretch of Route 66. The stops include a mix of augmented reality experiences, new murals, and selfie opportunities linked together through interactive storytelling. The 15 activation locations stretch from the Route 66 Visitor Center to the Singing Arrow Open Space, representing a mix of public facilities, orphan signs, and private property partnerships. The full experience will launch in September 2025 with web-based resources guiding participants through the experience.

This major creative initiative is supported through **CABQ non-recurring funds** along with a **\$200,000 Destination Forward Grant** from the NM Tourism Department focused on the augmented reality experiences and a \$250,000 **Route 66 Centennial Grant** from the Tourism Department focused on supporting murals and other art activations along Central Avenue.

[Refract AR](#) of Santa Fe is leading the Augmented Reality component of this initiative technically and creatively. Refract will also collaborate with local artists to develop each AR stop along Central. Invited AR artists include **Akilah Martinez, Jessica Helen Lopez, Hakim Bellamy, Dale Deforest, Casa Flamenca, Helen Atkins, Deb Jojola, Lea Anderson, Karl Orozco & Sonja Vigil Killer.**

Additional creative partners will be announced in February when contract terms are finalized. In addition, mural and graphic artists will be selected and announced in February.

Route 66 Exhibits & Special Events at Arts & Culture Venues

Albuquerque Museum, adjacent to Route 66, will showcase a **major Route 66 history and art exhibit from June 2026-November 2026**, during the Centennial. The exhibit will feature local stories from all peoples of the Route, old postcards, and artifacts. The Museum photo archive will be tapped to reproduce photos and postcards large-scale, with maps & historical interpretation, allowing viewers to go back in time on Route 66.

The **Community Events Staff** organizes annual events on Route 66 and at public venues on Central Avenue, including the KiMo Theatre, Old Town Plaza, BioPark Zoo and Botanic Garden, Nob Hill, Downtown, and the Route 66 Visitor Center. For the Centennial, Community Events is amplifying its free Route 66 events at these spots and coordinating with partners to develop and host Centennial events.

- **Route 66 Art Activation** Sept 2025 – Dec 2026
- **Rt 66 Summerfest** July 19, 2025 & July 18, 2026
- **BioPark Concerts** Summers 2025 & 2026
- **Route 66 Run & Walk*** TBD
- **Cultural Crossroads*** September 2025 & 2026
- **Central Ave Cruise*** September 2025 & 2026
- **Twinkle Light Parade** Dec. 6, 2025 & Dec. 5, 2026
- **Old Town Music** Year-round
- **KiMo Theater** Tours & group reservations
- **Route 66 Visitor Center** Year-round

**new events for the Centennial on Central Ave.*

Events on Rt 66 in ABQ, A-Z

Albuquerque's Birthday in Old Town
ArtWalk First Fridays Downtown
Bands of Enchantment at the KiMo
City Brights
Drink Local Downtown ABQ Pub Crawl
Festival Flamenco
Gathering of Nations (Expo NM)
Globalquerque on Civic Plaza
Jazz Fest on Civic Plaza
KiMo Theater Events
Lowrider Super Show
Luminaria Tour
New Year's Eve Before Dark
Nob Hill Holiday Shop and Stroll
Old Town Holiday Stroll & Walking Tours
Old Town Music Events
PRIDE parade
Rising High Arts Festival (at Fusion)
River of Lights at the BioPark
Rt 66 SummerFest (Nob Hill)
Space Valley/Space Fest (Route 66 Visitor Center)
State Fair of New Mexico (Expo NM)
Twinkle Light Parade
UNM Popejoy Hall performances & events
WestFest (West Central)
Zoo Music & BioPark concerts

Albuquerque Neon: The Stories Behind the Signs

Albuquerque Neon is an episodic oral history video series created by CABQ Media/Arts & Culture with a matching grant from the National Park Service. Local filmmaker Andre Ross is the videographer/editor. The series consists of six 10-minute episodes that will be shared beginning in 2025 through local viewings, Public Access channels, CABQ on-demand platforms, and the Visit ABQ Rt 66 Centennial website.

Episodes

History and Overview
Business and Roadtrips on Route 66
Public Art and Historic Signs
Neon Bending and Sign Making
Symbols and Culture of Route 66
Conservation and Collection

Interviewees

- Dr. Audra Bellmore, UNM Center for SW Research
- Councilor Klarissa Peña, CABQ City Council District 3
- Dr. Alicia Romero, history curator, Albuquerque Museum
- Bob Matteucci & Francesca Blueher, Paris Shoes
- Robert Randazzo, neon artist & owner of Absolute Neon
- Jimmie Hartley, owner of the Dog House
- Lindsay Fromm, Friends of Orphan Signs & FOS artists
- Sherri Brueggemann, CABQ Public Art Manager
- Arleigh Schray, neon bender at NM Neon Works
- Kaisa Berthuli, Rt 66 Office, National Park Service
- Curtis Mott, Zeon Signs, and colleagues
- Karl Orozco, fine artist & sign enthusiast
- Donatella Davanzo, historian and photo documentarian
- Carlos Garcia, business owner and sign collector

Public Art Route 66 Initiatives

New Public Art at the International District Park on Central: Public Art is municipal partner with National Trust for Historic Preservation on a **National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town** grant-funded project in the International District. NEA funded \$75,000 for Route 66 art in the ID, which will be a community-generated design led by selected artists: Samuel Cisneros, Denise Weaver Ross, Billy Jo Miller, and Elijah Chavez. Public Art will fabricate the artwork and install it in the new International District Park on Central.

Asphalt Art: Public Art is seeking funding matches for asphalt art at three intersections on Central Avenue. An asphalt mural is already planned for 3rd & Central downtown. Route 66 asphalt art will harken back to the historic painting of Route 66 shields on the road. Asphalt artists will be encouraged to incorporate the shield onto asphalt as was done historically across all eight states that Route 66 crosses. Currently, the only Route 66 stencil on New Mexico highways is in Mesita (see right).



Public Art Augmented: CABQ Public Art is working on a public art-oriented **Augmented Reality** project with Jak + Flux of Albuquerque. Jak + Flux will employ local artists to tell the stories of public art on Route 66 via a "Neon Highway" treatment that will capture, animate, and recreate excitement around public art at 10 sites on Central Avenue. The Public Art AR experience will be available to all visitors with a smart device via a web-based app and will last well beyond the Centennial celebration years – and likely grow beyond Central.



Nob Hill Gateways, courtesy of the artist, Terry Conrad

Back to Light! The longtime favorite "**Nob Hill Gateways**" public art constructed in 1993 on Central at the Girard and Washington intersections will be fully conserved with new electrical wiring and a refresh of the neon across the entire gateways, adding a new pop of color to Nob Hill Route 66 and bringing the 32-year-old beacons back to light.

Additional Public Art Initiatives supporting Route 66 Centennial:

- **Public Art Census** will roll out soon and include geo-locations on **all** city public art, including on Rt 66.
- **4th Street Inventory** of all historic signs—Friends of Orphan Signs has completed [this free, online resource](#) and accessory to their [Central Avenue Sign Inventory](#).
- **City Brights** has launched new light & digital art installations on or adjacent to Route 66 in Downtown Albuquerque. Look for it to return in Winter of 2025 and 2026!

Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency

The Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MR) has many Route 66 projects in progress, including sign rehabs, storefront grants, housing developments, motor lodge & hotel redevelopments, special events, and MRA plan updates. Several metro redevelopment areas (MRAs) are located along Route 66, and many are active. MRA projects add quality of life enhancements for residents and visitors to the corridor by providing places to stay and things to do.

MRA manages the Revamp Route 66 Sign Improvement Program, the Rail Trail, and many other popular initiatives designed to bring business and economic impact to the entire Route 66 footprint. MRA is an active collaborator with DAC, DMD, and City Council on the Route 66 corridor, using its special award abilities and financial instruments to boost housing projects, beautification, and business and tax incentives along Route 66.

Revamp Route 66 Sign Improvement Program

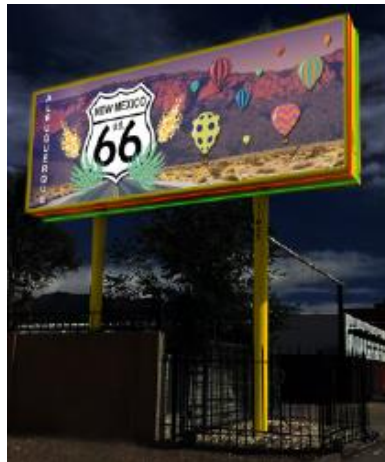
In fall 2023, DAC & MRA rolled out the **Revamp Route 66 Sign Improvement Program**. An evaluation process narrowed ~30 applicants down to 13 awardees who were granted a total of \$432,000 for Route 66 historic sign rehab.

To date, most projects are done or nearing completion. Some projects faced overages due to increases in labor and materials costs, but the property owners and sign companies have come through. By summer 2025, all of the more than a dozen sign projects will be complete along four of five City Council districts on Route 66.

REVAMP ROUTE 66 SIGN REHABS

- 5501 Plaza
- Americana Hotel
- Arrive ABQ
- Central Grille
- Dog House
- Imperial Inn
- Pickleballer
- Rt 66 Barber
- Sandia Peak Inn
- Tradewinds Plaza
- Utility Shack

Rehabs in turquoise are finished.
Projects in orange are in progress.



Revamp Route 66 rehabs (top left): Utility Shack design by Sign Plex; (top right) completed Imperial Inn rehab; (bottom left) new sign at Downtown Arrive Albuquerque; (bottom right) Sandia Peak Inn rehab.

Housing, Motor Lodge & Community Redevelopments

- **Imperial Inn:** historic Route 66 motel with 52 guest rooms, 16 residential suites, and 4,410 sq feet of commercial space.
- **Nuevo Atrisco:** At Central & Unser, this MR-financed community/commercial development has retail space and a plaza, building on an affordable housing development supported by MRA.
- **Ex Novo Brewery:** MRA awarded Ex Novo a Storefront Grant to redevelop the Firestone Building at 7th & Central. A new taproom, café, and bar, updating & expanding the popular hang-out.
- **Residence Inn at Presbyterian:** MRA is working with Presbyterian Hospital to complete the Residence Inn on Route 66, which will provide overnight accommodations for travelers and visitors to the hospital.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- **The Pearl:** MRA has approved a tax abatement for the construction of The Pearl, a 32-unit development on Central near Laguna.
- **The 66:** At Adams & Central, in 2025, The 66 will provide 96 housing units on a now-vacant lot.
- **Park Central** at San Mateo & Central takes two older high-rise buildings and prepares them for residential living with development partners.
- **Somos:** Somos is a 70-unit development at Central near Louisiana on a vacant lot. Coming 2026.



(top) Nuevo Atrisco development; (bottom) Ex Novo/Arrive ABQ development.

Downtown Improvement & Redevelopment

Downtown Albuquerque Redevelopment Plan was updated in 2024 for the first time in 20 years. The plan unites a “common vision to guide growth, investment, and development” in downtown Albuquerque. MRA, along with Mayor Keller and the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce have announced a plan to implement a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district in Downtown Albuquerque and to create a Business Improvement District (BID) with local businesses.

A Downtown TIF would authorize the city to acquire an increment of the property tax growth in the area and reinvest it in the same area. While the TIF will be property-tax based, a new state law will also allow up to 75% of the increment of growth of city, county and state gross receipts tax to be reinvested in the area over that period. A Downtown TIF could produce roughly \$200 million.



(above) MRA designs for a 7-mile walking /cycling trail circling downtown. The **RailTrail** will highlight the history of Route 66 and the railroad, with a luminous intersection at Route 66 designed by late Albuquerque architect Antoine Predock.

Health, Housing, and Homelessness

HHH has several Route 66-based projects. Recently completed affordable housing on Rt 66 include **Luminaria Senior Community** and **Hiland Plaza** (accessible for deaf and blind persons; at right). The following affordable housing projects are in the pipeline for construction on Rt 66 and are slated for 2025-26 completion. Development partners are Albuquerque Housing Authority, High Desert Housing & Sol Housing.

- **Casitas del Camino**—60th and Central NW, 88 units
- **Route 66 Flats**—7600 Central Ave. SE, 47 units
- **Farolito Senior Community**—10501 Central Ave. SE, 82 units
- **Somos Apartments**—7200 Central Ave. SE, 59 of 70 units are affordable housing

Farolito Senior Community is an apartment community in pre-development that will serve seniors 55 and older with low incomes. Farolito is located directly north of its sister project, Luminaria Senior Community on Central Avenue, and will incorporate many of the same design elements to celebrate the heyday of Route 66 while creating a virtual and physical gateway to Route 66. The site was previously part of the Ponderosa RV and Mobile Home Park and is owned by the New Mexico State Land Office (NMSLO). NMSLO leased the land to Sol Housing who will make improvements and develop new affordable housing apartments on the 2.3-acre site. 94% of earnings from lease payments support public education, public universities, and hospitals in NM.

Somos is a public-private partnership between the MRA and the Greater Albuquerque Housing Project (GAHP), which will be a 70-unit multi-family building with commercial elements. This project will leverage its proximity to nearby community assets such as the Talin Market, ART stations, and the International District Library, providing low-income residents with easy access to food, transit, and learning opportunities. Affordability, environmental sustainability, and community engagement are at the heart of this project.

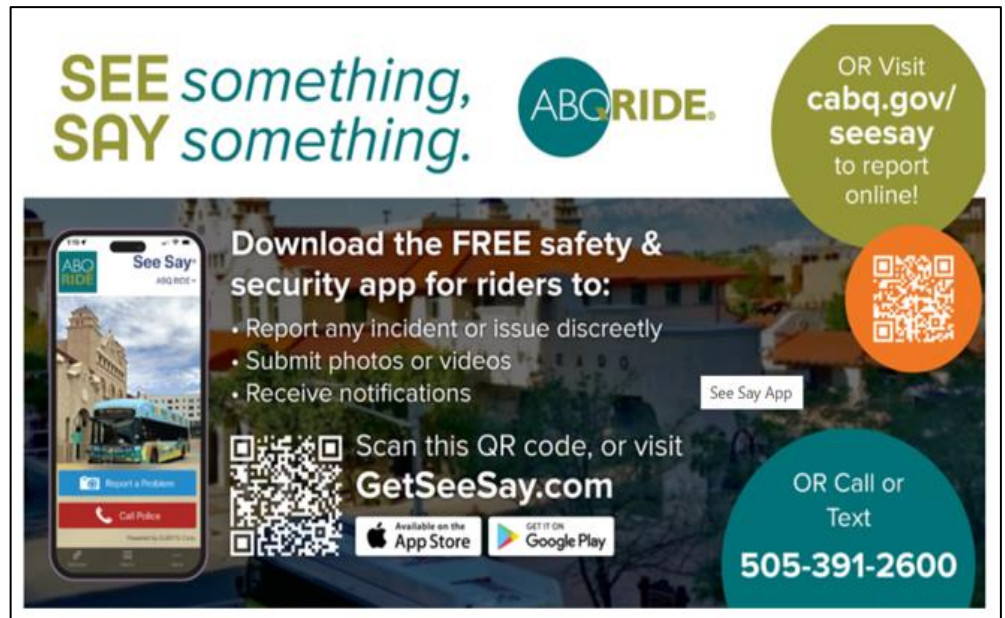


(left) Farolito Senior Community; (right) Luminaria Senior Community.

Transit Department

ABQ Ride's **Zero Fares** program on Route 66 makes the Transit Department a vital force in the Centennial, providing locals and visitors free public transportation along the corridor. Zero fares help tourists speaking many languages ride with ease. In addition, Transit worked with APD this year to improve safety on buses **with transit safety officers and police service aides** riding buses and providing mobile patrols.

In October 2024, the department launched the **See Say App** which provides for real-time security and cleanliness reporting directly to the department. Transit also piloted a new form of public transport in 2024, a ride-share option, ABQ Ride Connect, operated with electric vans. ABQ Ride Connect brings riders from the SW Mesa to Central & Unser Transit Center, and from the Rio Grande to the ART BioPark station to connect with ART and the Rt 66 Corridor. This service will continue throughout 2025.



With help from Albuquerque Museum, Transit's **"Then & Now"** program with historic interpretive elements, factoids and archival photos, debuted at ART station monitors on Route 66 in 2024. Transit also replaced all bus stop signs along the entire Central corridor, as well as repainted all bus shelters in 2024. All ART platforms have had lighting repairs, new epoxy flooring, new decals and are painted every 6 months.

ABQRide vehicles and stations will feature **wraps and graphics** to promote the Centennial and Rt 66. All bus shelters will be replaced by the end of 2025 on the Central corridor. These new shelters will include lighting, real time arrival information (at high ridership stops), and new trash can designs.



(top) Transit's new See Say App; (bottom) graphic bus wraps to promote Route 66

Department of Municipal Development

DMD has many projects along all parts of Route 66 related to infrastructure, traffic control and engineering, development of public spaces, sidewalks and bike trails, and lighting. By nature, its projects are highly collaborative and often involve teaming with other City departments and Route 66 stakeholders.

Intersection safety upgrades will be done in 2025, including **HAWK** (high-frequency crosswalks) and other improvements for pedestrians on Central Avenue. To encourage calmer traffic, DMD is partner with Public Art to create an **asphalt art** mural at Central Avenue and 3rd street. DMD is also on the project team for a prospective Bloomberg Asphalt Art grant with Public Art to add more asphalt art to Route 66 in 2025 and 2026. **Central Avenue Complete Streets** was completed in spring of 2024, and more corridor infrastructure improvements are coming in 2025.

The **East Central Road Diet** project will embark upon a Phase II in 2027, including the addition of two HAWK signals between Louisiana and Juan Tabo. Additional PHBs will be installed near Dorothy and one near Britt. Further, Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI) were added at San Mateo & Louisiana.



DMD's **West Central** projects wrapped Phase 1 this year, including improvements to the north side of Central Avenue between Saraccino Place and 90th Street. Improvements consisted of lighting, frontage road construction, storm drainage improvements, bike and pedestrian facilities. In 2026 and 2027, West Central Phase II will commence, filling in the missing or gap infrastructure on both the north and south sides of Central between Saraccino Place and 98th streets. These improvements will include **storm drainage, lighting, ADA compliance, bike lanes (left), pedestrian facilities, and intersection improvements** for \$8 million.

In 2025, DMD will install **198 pedestrian lights** between Louisiana and Eubank on East Central Avenue.

A **PAW (Pedestrian Alert Warning system)** was installed near Louisiana and Central, with the hopes of improving safety for pedestrians and drivers along Rt 66. Also, the City's first [PHB signal](#) was installed at Alvarado Dr. & Lomas Blvd. part of the 50 Mile Activity Loop. PHB signals differ from other pedestrian signals requiring drivers to stop and creating a safer environment than a standard crosswalk. Currently, the City has more than eight PHB signals, with several along the Central corridor.

DMD's Safe and Smarter Downtown Project funneled \$1.8 million in funding to upgrade existing lights and infrastructure in the downtown area.

DMD helped build the **Fire Station 12** on Central Avenue SE, which will be completed in 2025, adding AFR capacity on Route 66.

DMD is also involved in completing a collaborative project with Parks and Recreation to install a **storm drainage pond and recreation site** with green space adjacent to the International District Library on East Central.

Parks & Recreation Department

Parks & Recreation has many properties of interest on or adjacent to Rt 66, including parks, open spaces (OS), the bosque, trails, bike paths, swimming pools, splashpads, and more. Parks directly on Central Avenue include Robinson Park, home of weekly farmer's markets much of the year, and Soldiers & Sailors Park. Tiguex Park and Old Town are also PRD properties just off Route 66. Some of the projects below are PRD Route 66 feature projects and initiatives in the works leading up to the Centennial.

International District Park

Parks & Rec is working with Pland to complete the International District (ID) Park on Route 66 next to the ID Library. DMD has constructed a retention/drainage pond. The Public Art division will install Route 66-themed artwork in the park, which will be created by community with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town Program and a collaboration between Public Art, community artists in the ID, and **National Trust for Historic Preservation**. The website for the park is idlpark.org. Features include:

- A large turf field sized for U8 Soccer play, multi-use sports play and public gathering.
- Large turf areas for picnics and event seating.
- Designated food vendor parking.
- Green stormwater infrastructure planting.
- Beautiful tree lined walkways.
- A community food forest.
- A charming promenade walkway for community market space and vendor tents.
- Accessible walkways throughout.
- A stage for mobile movie and music performances.
- Library themed shade structures throughout the park.
- Artfully designed park fencing.
- Seating walls.
- Spaces for community art pieces.
- Security cameras, fencing and extensive park lighting.
- A large-scale public art installation designed by local artists



Tijeras Arroyo BioZone

Parks & Rec is working on renovations, upgrades, and an education center for the Tijeras Arroyo BioZone Open Space (TABZ), located on Old Route 66 at 15600 Central Avenue SE. On September 19, 2024, a community meeting was held to gather feedback on the Tijeras Bio-Zone Education Center. Under contract with the City, Pland Collaborative presented three conceptual design options (Concepts A-C, linked below). Due to the project site being located in a floodplain, there are constraints on what kind of structure(s) can be built on the property. Each of the concepts addresses these constraints by showing alternative options for a gathering/classroom structure.

[Concept A](#): shows a traditional new building in place of the old building

[Concept B](#): shows a series of shade structures that are concentrated in one central area

[Concept C](#): shows a series of separate shade structures of different sizes that are separated/decentralized

Concept B | "Centralized" Outdoor Shelters



Features of the TABZ plan include:

- open Carnué Land Grant archaeological site for public tours
- install interpretive signage about the TABZ at six locations on Old Rt 66
- parking lot and trail improvements
- complete interpretive site plan for Carnué Land Grant archaeological site
- begin limited guided tours at TABZ
- complete education center design concept plan
- construct an environmental education center

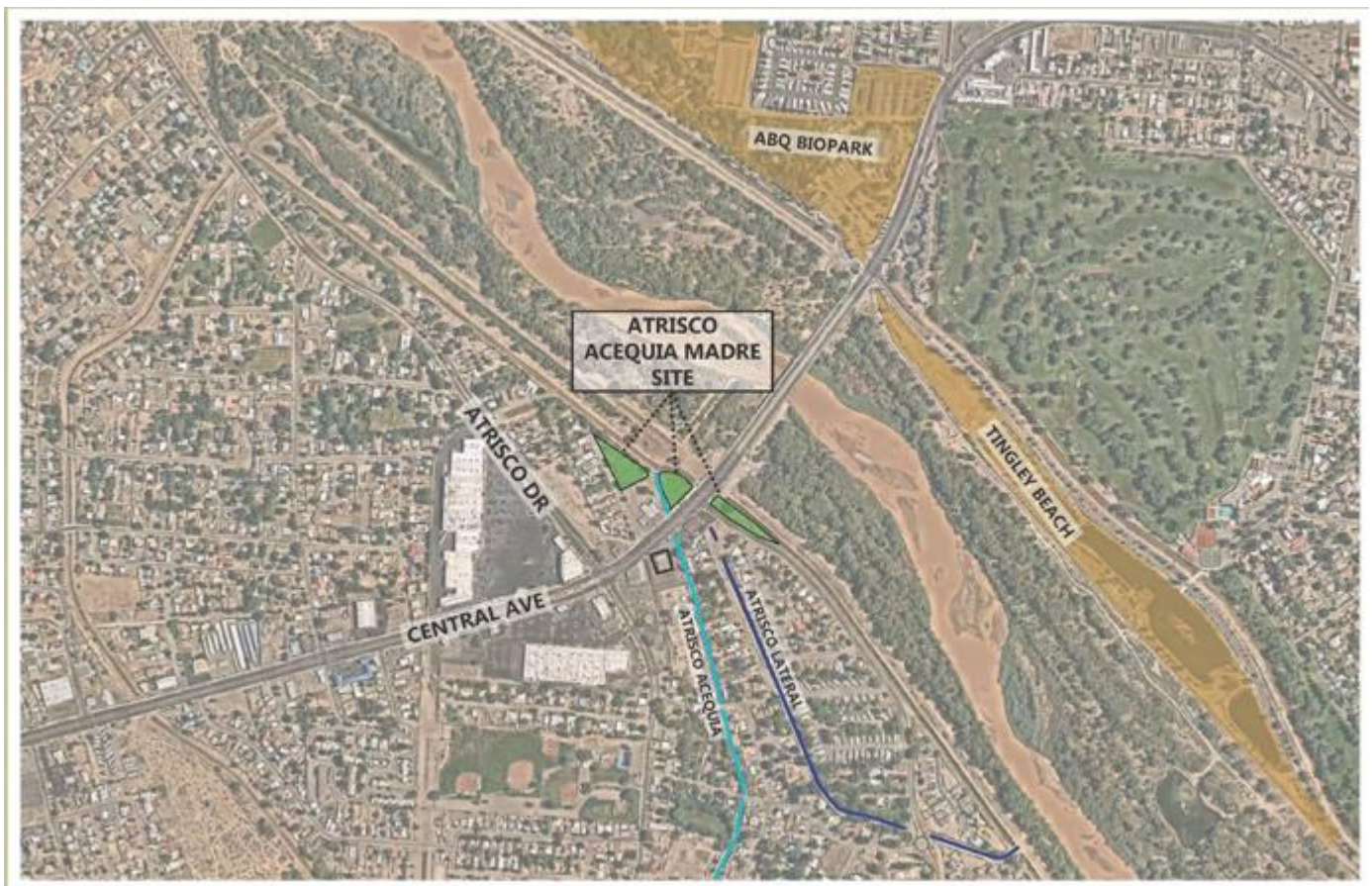
The Open Space Division (OSD) is collaborating with the Ciudad Soil and Conservation District (CIUDAD) to enhance public programming and land restoration at the Tijeras Bio-Zone Center. CIUDAD has received \$581,531 through three grants aimed at implementing stream restoration, floodplain improvements, and the design and construction of an ADA sensory trail and Education Center.

Collaborations aim to create a dynamic and accessible environment that benefits the community and supports ecological restoration efforts.

Acequia Madre Open Space

The goal of the [Atrisco Acequia Madre project](#) is to develop a plan for an educational, outdoor site near Central Avenue and the Rio Grande River at Sunset SW, to celebrate the acequia culture and to protect & preserve the agricultural traditions of the Rio Grande Valley. This project is a collaboration between Bernalillo County, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD), the City of Albuquerque, the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA), the South Valley Regional Association of Acequias (SVRRA) and CESOSS (Center for Social Sustainable Systems).

On the west side of the river, across from the Albuquerque BioPark, is the heading of the Atrisco Acequia, originating from the Acequia Madre de Atrisco, one of the oldest irrigation canals in the United States. In order to share the history of acequia culture and the role the acequias have played in the valley through the years, four agencies have formed a partnership to fund a planning effort to create a conceptual site plan. This planning effort will provide recommendations for connections from the west side of the river to the east as well as connections from the north side of Central to the South Valley. Improvements may include educational and recreational use of the Open Space through a system of trails and interpretive sites which will incorporate an historical marker developed by SVRRA and the State Historic Preservation Office. CABQ applied for Congressional Directed Spending to help support the open space plan.



Albuquerque Community Safety Department

Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) Department continues its commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals along Route 66 by offering critical services and outreach efforts, including:

- **24/7 Operations:** ACS has maintained 24/7 operations since launching in August 2023. This includes focusing on unsheltered populations along Rt 66, providing emergency transportation to shelters during graveyard hours, and collaborating with the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) for after-hours transportation.
- **Engagement with Local Businesses:** ACS's dedicated Downtown Team is strengthening connections with local businesses to understand and address safety and community concerns. Efforts to increase engagement are underway. ACS now has a Public Outreach Coordinator who will assist with engagement efforts.
- **Utilizing ACS' New Office:** ACS's office location at Alvarado Transit Center (ATC) continues to serve as a hub for strategic planning & coordination of Rt 66 outreach initiatives.
- **Proactive Outreach and Engagement:** ACS's Downtown Team, in collaboration with APD, conducts regular outreach to ensure a visible and consistent presence on Route 66. Further efforts to enhance engagement are prioritized.
- **Emergency Graveyard Transportation:** ACS remains focused on providing emergency transportation services during graveyard hours to connect unhoused individuals with shelter resources. Since November 1, 2024, this service has transported **1,432 individuals to shelter**.
- **ACS Street Outreach & Resource Coordinator Team:** The ACS Downtown Team and other ACS responders are driving pro-active community engagement along Route 66. The ACS Connect to Care program remains a cornerstone of ACS's efforts involving collaborative pop-up events with various city departments, community partners, and service providers.

Connect to Care Program

Since August 6, 2023, ACS has hosted **nine Connect to Care** events along the Route 66 corridor.

The success of the ACS **Connect to Care** program has drawn recognition from partners such as the NM Department of Health, which has begun to join ACS at these events.

Looking forward, ACS is committed to expanding its Connect to Care program and increasing pro-active engagement on Route 66. By working with community partners and leveraging its resources, ACS aims to address the needs of Albuquerque's unsheltered populations while fostering trust and meaningful connections in the community.

ACS Connect to Care Partners

- ACS Street Outreach Team
- ACS Case Navigation Team
- ACS Community-Oriented Response & Assistance Team (CORA)
- ACS Opioid Prevention & Education Team (OEP)
- UNM's General Internal Medicine Division
- NM Veteran's Integration Center
- NM Vets for Pets
- First Nations Community HealthSource
- Albuquerque Police Department
- Road Runner Food Bank
- NM Department of Health

On Average, each ACS Connect to Care event has the following outcomes:

- Outreach and engagement to 40+ individuals seeking resources
- Assists more than 14 individuals with housing assessments
- ACS partner UNMH typically provides medical treatment to 14 or more individuals
- ACS assists 1-2 individuals with SOAR referrals for benefits
- ACS assists 2-3 individuals with resources to obtain vital records such as ID and birth certificate
- Assist 1-2 individuals with Section 8 housing assessments
- Provide 3-4 individuals with transport to local shelters
- Provide an average of 4 individuals with assistance in obtaining clothing
- Provide 3-5 dogs with examinations and dog food

In addition to providing resources and support to unsheltered individuals at Connect to Care events, ACS frequently encounters other vulnerable groups, including individuals affected by sex trafficking and domestic violence. Trained staff at these events deliver trauma-informed care, offering critical support and connecting individuals to resources that help them escape harmful situations, recover from trauma, and rebuild their lives. ACS takes pride in hosting these events to support the community's most vulnerable members. (See photo at right of Connect to Care event.)



ACS Connect to Care Event

APD & AFR

APD's Central Corridor Tact Plan includes officers specifically assigned to work Route 66. APD's presence is a deterrent to criminal activity, and their efforts are focused on safety for patrons and businesses, as well as addressing crime on Central and adjacent neighborhoods.

Central Narcotics Team works bus stops and problem areas, working with undercover officers and confidential informants to uncover illicit, illegal narcotics from problem locations around Route 66.

While complying with the requirements of the DOJ injunction, APD also works daily with the **Encampment** team to address illegal activity and unlawful encampments on Central and surrounding areas. A recent Supreme Court decision changes the approach to working on encampments on Route 66.

APD worked with Transit to staff **Transit security officers** on Route 66 buses that continues to operate.

AFR and APD started a **brush fire operation** in 2024. Twice weekly, a team of APD/AFR staff focused their efforts towards illegal outdoor fires. The operation led to arrests for outstanding felony warrants and citations issued before ending in Summer 2024.

Planning Department

The Planning Department has many Route 66 projects and initiatives, including code enforcement, compliance, zoning, landmarks, urban planning, and long-range planning. Planning consistently works along the corridor on many fronts.

Story Map of Central Avenue

Planning's Historic Preservation division is working on a **Central Avenue Story Map**, weaving stories of the community and history to explain important buildings and places on Rt 66 with new interpretive signage, either 3-D or online.

Landmarks and Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation is working with the Landmarks Commission to identify multiple Route 66 structures for landmarking. **Landmark designation helps preserve and protect sites.** On April 3, 2024, Council voted to make the Central Avenue Bridge crossing site an official City Landmark. Located on Central between Tingley Drive & Sunset Road, the bridge is a key part of the city's Route 66 history. Constructed to provide highway access over the Rio Grande River, the bridge allowed westward expansion of the city and is the 24th designated City Landmark. A site or structure can be considered for City Landmark designation if it is of particular historical, architectural, cultural, or archaeological significance. Because City Landmarks carry historical significance to the city and its residents, the Landmarks Commission strives to preserve them for future generations for the purposes of access, enjoyment, and education, and more along Route 66 are being considered for landmark status.



Code Enforcement & Compliance

CABQ Code Enforcement Division plays a vital role in maintaining safety, cleanliness, and compliance along the Central corridor. Code Enforcement's activities are targeted to enhance the urban environment and support the revitalizations of this historic corridor. Key initiatives include:

Addressing Blighted Properties: Identification and resolution of violations such as dilapidated buildings, abandoned vehicles, and unsafe structures. Efforts aim to ensure compliance with the City's regulations to promote safety and visual appeal.

Weed & Litter Control: Regular inspections to enforce ordinances related to overgrown vegetations, illegal dumping, and litter accumulation, thereby contributing to a cleaner and more inviting corridor for residents and visitors.

Vacant Property Compliance: Ensuring that vacant buildings are registered and maintained in accordance with city ordinances, preventing them from becoming safety hazards or eyesores.

Illegal Encampments and Public Safety Coordination: Collaboration with APD and ACS to address unauthorized encampments and ensure the safety of the unhoused population with mitigating risks to surrounding communities.

Community Engagement & Outreach: Working with property owners, businesses, and residents along the corridor to provide education on zoning requirements and resources available for property rehabilitation.

Code Enforcement has successfully resolved numerous ordinance violations along the Route 66 corridor. These efforts contribute to creating a vibrant and welcoming environment that aligns with the Centennial vision of celebrating Albuquerque's historic stretch of Route 66.

Code Enforcement, along with local law enforcement have closed down two problematic properties along Central Ave. due to substandard living conditions and code violations since the last Route 66 update: Both locations had many violations including:

- Exposed wiring, electrical hazards, inadequate heating, and missing GFCI outlets and electrical covers.
- Fire hazards including missing and broken smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and blocked exits.
- Hazardous plumbing, major plumbing issues in units, and broken bathroom fixtures.
- Dangerous disrepair including a leaking roof, water damage, and evidence of a roach infestation.
- Drug paraphernalia, including needles, was found throughout the complex grounds.

Code Enforcement has also been involved in bringing 500 new e-scooters to Albuquerque as a new **Shared Active Transportation Program**. Lime e-scooters are now available along Central as an alternate form of transportation, as are scooters from Spin.

Investing in ABQ Route 66—Other Notable Public Projects



The University of New Mexico, New Mexico's flagship university, broke ground on a new state-of-the-art **Center for Collaborative Arts and Technology**. CCAT will include new performance space for musicians and theater artists, new media studios including a VR theater, and more space for students of the College of Fine Arts. Right on Route 66, the performing arts center will be a prominent new addition to the physical and cultural landscape of Route 66 in the university area.



The national advocacy group, Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership, is working with the Research Route 66 Consortium and the University of New Mexico to explore the feasibility of establishing a **Route National Research Center** in Albuquerque. The City's Department of Arts & Culture has endorsed the center in initial feasibility conversations with UNM partners.

(top and left) Architectural renderings of UNM Center for Collaborative Arts and Technology by architects [Diller Scofidio + Renfro \(DS+R\)](#).

State of New Mexico, Bernalillo County, and the City of Albuquerque all agree that Albuquerque needs more housing and redevelopment on Route 66. Officials are now in talks to redevelop Expo New Mexico, site of the New Mexico State Fair on Route 66 in the International District. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham issued an RFP for plans to redevelop the Expo New Mexico property, with RFPs expected to be evaluated by the end of January 2025. Bernalillo County Commission will vote in March on a resolution to establish a State Fair Grounds TIDD (tax increment development district) to aid in redevelopment.



(above) Expo New Mexico grounds, footage by KOB.

Proposed Centennial Projects Seeking Funding

City of Albuquerque has fortunately received funding for several Route 66 Centennial projects; however, the City also has a “wish list” of proposed projects for Route 66 that do not have funds attached (below).

Festoon Lighting—add classy and elegant festoon lighting in three areas along Route 66, primarily the International District, Downtown, and Old Town.

Billboard Placements—the city would like to add billboards and other signage in Albuquerque and along the interstates to attract travelers and preview the art and augmented reality experiences already in development.

Increased Beautification—extend Duke City Ambassadors cleaning service along Route 66 to improve streetscape and better protect pedestrians in preparation for the opening. Efforts would coordinate with Solid Waste, Transit, and DMD for increased maintenance, cleaning, and repairs.

Enhanced Safety Efforts—the community has spoken regarding safety on Route 66. The City needs more boots on the ground on Route 66 in preparation to make for safe activations and visitorship.

Revamp Route 66 Sign Improvement Program (Additional Rounds)—Arts & Culture and Metro Redevelopment Agency would like to initiate new rounds of its successful sign rehab program with property owners on Central Avenue and “old” Route 66, 4th Street.

Activation sponsorships—Arts & Culture has a draft plan for activation sponsorships. These activations would include issuing funds to Route 66 businesses, nonprofits, and neighborhood associations for existing or new Route 66 arts and culture initiatives.



(top) festoon lighting on Central Avenue Bridge;
(middle) Block by Block's Duke City Ambassadors;
(bottom) Dog House sign rehab in production.

Communications, Media, and Marketing

The Route 66 Centennial in Albuquerque is gaining traction early as a community celebration that everyone can participate in together as a community. A large part of the campaign will be promoting Route 66, supporting community partners, developing fun marketing ideas, and working with local, national, and possible international media via well-executed communications timelines, press releases, media targeting, and strategic press conferences announcing initiatives.

Media on CABQ Rt 66 Projects

Below are links to recent news items on CABQ's Rt 66 endeavors.

MOTOR LODGE REDEVELOPMENTS (MRA)

1. https://www.abqjournal.com/business/the-imperial-puts-up-restored-neon-sign-to-reopen-wednesday/article_a342cf58-d4d2-11ee-9c77-0bbo8808573a.html#tncms-source=home-featured-7-block
2. https://www.housingfinance.com/developments/route-66-motel-revamped-into-apartments_o
3. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/old-route-66-albuquerque-motel-reopens-with-multi-million-dollar-revamp/>
4. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/renovation-of-historic-route-66-motel-in-albuquerque-nears-completion/>
5. <https://www.krqe.com/video/old-route-66-albuquerque-motel-reopens-with-multi-million-dollar-revamp/9362480/>
6. <https://www.newmexicomagazine.org/blog/post/gather-round-el-vado-motel-albuquerque/>

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS

7. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/bike-lanes-coming-to-central-corridor-in-downtown-albuquerque/>

HOUSING ON RT 66

8. <https://lascrucestoday.com/housing-new-mexico-celebrates-groundbreaking-of-route-66-flats-in-albuquerque/>
9. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/new-affordable-housing-complex-breaks-ground-in-southwest-albuquerque/>

W CENTRAL RT 66 VISITOR CENTER

10. https://www.abqjournal.com/news/bernalillo-county-to-donate-route-66-visitors-center-to-the-city/article_33847d8c-d40b-11ee-866c-1fcc1b72ef39.html
11. <https://www.koat.com/article/albuquerque-route-66-visitor-center-not-open-ribbon-ceremony/43923619>
12. <https://www.cabq.gov/council/find-your-councilor/district-3/news/route-66-visitors-center-site-dedication-and-design-kickoff>
13. <https://www.abqjournal.com/2599082/a-ribbon-cutting-was-held-last-year-for-albuquerques-route-66.html>
14. <https://www.route66news.com/2023/08/15/albuquerque-county-to-move-to-revitalize-an-original-stretch-of-route-66/>
15. <https://www.route66news.com/2023/06/29/route-66-visitor-center-in-albuquerque-quietly-opens-grand-opening-tentatively-set-for-august/>
16. <https://www.koat.com/article/albuquerque-route-66-visitor-center-not-open-ribbon-ceremony/43923619>
17. <https://www.enr.com/articles/57417-best-small-project-west-central-route-66-visitor-center>
18. https://www.abqjournal.com/news/route-66-visitor-center-will-get-a-city-commission/article_f3b480b8-5514-11ef-b2f1-a32f75d4e092.html#tncms-source=home-featured-7-block
19. https://www.abqjournal.com/news/get-your-kicks-whats-going-on-with-the-route-66-visitor-center-and-whats-next/article_94f69e30-4de9-11ef-a15c-4b2a55350258.html

TOURISM ABQ RT 66

20. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/best-of-the-world-20-experiences-for-2024>
21. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/why-neon-lights-are-glowing-again-across-the-us>
22. <https://www.krqe.com/news/new-mexico/national-geographic-lists-new-mexico-route-66-road-trip-as-one-of-top-travel-experiences-for-2024/>
23. <https://rrobsrver.com/national-geographic-names-route-66-through-new-mexico-as-a-top-travel-experience-for-2024/>
24. <https://www.visitalbuquerque.org/about-abq/route-66/>
25. <https://www.newmexico.org/things-to-do/road-trips/enchantedeight/route66/>
26. <https://ladailypost.com/nmtd-national-geographic-names-route-66-through-new-mexico-a-top-travel-experiences-for-2024/>
27. <https://www.newmexicomagazine.org/blog/post/100th-anniversary-why-we-love-new-mexico-our-signs-get-your-motor-running/>
28. <https://www.motortrend.com/features/hot-rods-route-the-end-albuquerque-to-l-a-66-tour-march-1988-982-1366-44-1/>
29. <https://www.pastemagazine.com/travel/albuquerque/10-reasons-to-visit-albuquerque-that-you-maybe-didnt-know-about>
30. <https://ridermagazine.com/2023/09/18/a-flagstaff-to-albuquerque-motorcycle-ride-on-a-less-obvious-route/>
31. <https://www.motortrend.com/features/hot-rods-route-66-tour-part-3-oklahoma-city-to-albuquerque-february-1988-982-1368-58-1/>
32. <https://us3.campaign-archive.com/?u=306fc3b21030d6f0128cc4af9&id=2b66dc5312>

SINGING ROAD, EAST MOUNTAINS

33. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/take-drive-down-americas-musical-highway-180958449/>
34. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/singing-road-slowly-losing-its-voice/>
35. <https://www.rvtravel.com/highway-sings-true-visit-1022/>
36. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/musical-highway>

REVAMP ROUTE 66 (DAC & MRA)

37. <https://www.cabq.gov/artsculture/news/revamping-the-mother-road-city-announces-winners-of-route-66-sign-improvement-grants>
38. <https://www.cabq.gov/artsculture/news/historic-route-66-sign-restoration-program-is-a-201csign201d-of-a-comeback>
39. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/city-of-albuquerque-identifies-vintage-signs-that-will-be-restored-on-historic-route-66/>
40. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/city-of-albuquerque-announces-route-66-sign-grant-program/>
41. <https://www.cabq.gov/mra/revamp-route-66-sign-improvement>
42. https://www.abqjournal.com/business/the-imperial-puts-up-restored-neon-sign-to-reopen-wednesday/article_a342cf58-d4d2-11ee-9c77-0bbo8808573a.html

ABQ NEON VIDEO SERIES AWARD (DAC, NPS)

43. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/route-66-2023-cost-share-grant-awards-announced.htm>
44. <https://www.cabq.gov/artsculture/news/route-66-rides-again>
45. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/albuquerque-to-get-national-park-service-award-for-route-66/>

VISIT ABQ CAMPAIGNS

46. <https://www.krqe.com/news/new-mexico/visit-albuquerque-launches-new-campaign-highlighting-iconic-roadway-in-new-mexico/>
47. <https://www.facebook.com/VisitABQ/videos/3-fun-facts-about-route-66-in-albuquerque-nm/1362539434421233/>

PUBLIC ART

48. <https://www.kob.com/new-mexico/national-project-seeks-route-66-story-submissions-ahead-of-100th-birthday/>
49. <https://www.krqe.com/video/new-campaign-collecting-stories-of-route-66/9402289/>
50. https://www.abqjournal.com/clickable/bernalillo-outpost-art-project-sculptures/article_bdc8e9bo-9e87-11ee-9877-f729dbba36cd.html
51. <https://www.kob.com/new-mexico/nonprofit-to-revitalize-historic-neon-signs-in-albuquerque/>

COMMUNITY EVENTS

52. <https://www.kob.com/new-mexico/route-66-summerfest-shines-through-the-rain/>

PUBLIC SAFETY

- 53. <https://www.kob.com/new-mexico/police-operation-concentrates-on-route-66-ahead-of-balloon-fiesta/>
- 54. <https://www.kunm.org/kunm-news-update/2023-08-09/wed-biden-talks-the-economy-and-manufacturing-during-nm-visit-black-feather-fire-update-more>
- 55. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/new-gates-set-to-help-traffic-control-on-weekend-nights-in-downtown-abq/>

RAIL TRAIL (MRA)

- 56. https://www.abqjournal.com/news/city-of-albuquerque-unveils-designs-for-rail-trail-which-includes-a-25-foot-neon-tumbleweed/article_db3ac628-299b-11ee-9dd1-1bf24988c47d.html
- 57. <https://www.cabq.gov/mra/news/albuquerque-rail-trail-a-vision-unveiled>

RT 66 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

- 58. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-approves-trailhead-plans-despite-some-residential-opposition/>
- 59. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/what-happened-to-albuquerques-short-lived-red-ryder-theme-park/>
- 60. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/a-bridge-on-central-may-become-an-official-albuquerque-landmark/>
- 61. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/albuquerque-parks-rec-working-finalizing-234201283.html>
- 62. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/news/albuquerque-parks-and-rec-working-on-finalizing-route-66-open-space-trailhead/ar-AA109Adc?ocid=BingNewsSerp>

RT 66 AUGMENTED REALITY

- 63. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/albuquerque-looking-for-creators-of-a-new-ar-app-for-route-66-centennial-celebration/>
- 64. <https://www.cabq.gov/artsculture/news/route-66-takes-reality-down-the-road>

GENERAL REVITALIZATION

- 65. https://www.abqjournal.com/business/city-county-prepare-for-route-66-anniversary-with-revitalization-of-south-valley-roads/article_97bdecae-3792-11ee-8d4f-2f1747caddff.html
- 66. <https://www.kob.com/new-mexico/albuquerque-to-revamp-route-66-as-100th-birthday-nears/>

CLEANING UP CENTRAL—CODE ENFORCEMENT

<https://abqraw.com/post/abq-code-enforcement-boards-up-tewa-motor-lodge/>
<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/news/cleaning-up-central-city-closes-crime-ridden-motel>
<https://citydesk.org/2024/whats-next-for-east-centrals-tewa-motor-lodge/>

EXPO NM REDEVELOPMENT

https://www.abqjournal.com/news/article_39ba471c-ddca-11ef-993e-2b4d739775fe.html
https://www.abqjournal.com/news/article_39ba471c-ddca-11ef-993e-2b4d739775fe.html#tncms-source=home-featured-7-block